

THE  
PARISIAN;  
OR,  
GENUINE ANECDOTES  
OF  
DISTINGUISHED AND NOBLE  
CHARACTERS.  
*IN TWO VOLUMES.*

VOL. II.

*Fictis meminerit nos non jocari fabulis.*

*LONDON:*

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE,

AT THE

MINERVA PRESS,

LEADENHALL-STREET.

MDCXCIV.

THE  
PARISIAN.  
CHAP. XIII.

AN event of the next day confirmed Madame de Germeil in a suspicion that totally disappointed such an expectation. Sir Edward Lockyer was in the evening a self-invited guest; and Madame de Germeil usually allowed Fitzpier to join her party, because the Duke yet seemed partial to him: he was not, however, a favourite with her, for the ceremony of soothing her vanity appeared to him so troublesome and superfluous, that he chose to omit it.

‘Pray, Mr. Fitzpier,’ said Sir Edward, continuing an oration which had never ceased from the moment of his entrance, ‘may I ask—may I inquire, who is the handsome foreigner who was talking with you so earnestly yesterday—no, I mean on Tuesday, on the road to . . . I protest I forget what road; but I believe it was the road to . . .’

‘Sir,’ said Fitzpier, interrupting him, ‘he is from Ireland; you do not, I hope, call him a foreigner?’ ‘Oh, dear, no!’ returned Sir Edward, in a shrieking voice, ‘surely not, by no means—certainly not: but the gentleman I speak of was a ——’ ‘Oh, yes,’ interrupted Fitzpier, rather impetuously, ‘you mean Baron ——’

‘I thought so,’ continued the indefatigable babbler, ‘I thought the gentleman was from France. I was just going to say he was a French gentleman; though I discovered it more by his manner than his person, which is—’

‘It is Baron Wayermann, a German,’ cried the other, endeavouring, in vain, to restrain his impatience.

‘——Which is, in my opinion, very handsome. Excuse me ladies, I admire the fair ladies of your country; there is so much charming vivacity, so much good-humoured freedom, such a pretty— But I was observing that I think this French gentleman very handsome, and a very fine figure of a man.’

‘By G—!’ said Fitzpier, losing all patience, ‘if you were to place a stick perpendicularly, to touch his knee and foot, you would find that his leg makes as complete a semi-circle as ever Sir Isaac Newton drew.’

‘—A very fine figure indeed! and a handsome face to crown it withal; fine intelligent eyes, and fine turned features.’

‘His mouth is turned into his ear by a stroke of the palsy,’ cried Fitzpier, in a rage.

Laure had listened to Sir Edward's interrupted harangue in a consternation she could scarcely conceal, and Madame de Germeil seemed to think it very mysterious; but Adeline, Madame L'Arminiere, and the Duke, feeling neither doubt nor embarrassment, enjoyed the scene without restraint, and made no effort to control their mirth.

'Bless me then, surely,' continued the eternal Sir Edward, 'we don't mean the same person: I think it cannot be the same person. The gentleman I saw is tall, and well proportioned; a fine figure, a very fine figure! with a clear complexion, and dark eyes; but his mouth is quite strait, and when he speaks—'

'He speaks to the purpose,' interrupted the irritated Irishman, 'and never outruns his own breath, or the patience of his hearers.'

Sir Edward had just penetration enough to discover that Fitzpier had lost his temper, an accident that never happening to himself, he was not quick at observing in others; he endeavoured to sooth him with a variety of excuses, insensibly ending in an involuntary self-congratulation, on his own happy mode of adjusting debates, and reconciling differences; recording with an inexhaustible memory, numberless instances to prove it, from the occurrences of Lockyer-Place.

Fitzpier recovered his usual good humour, when he thought the danger of a discovery was past; but Madame de Germeil continued to cherish suspicions, which, though she could not reconcile to probability, urged her to attend still more closely to the conduct of Fitzpier.

Madame de Germeil had not an intention, when she entered Harrowgate, of remaining there more than two or three days; but hearing from Mrs. Grenby the report that she was residing in one of the Duke of Harmington's houses, she determined to lengthen her stay at a place so much frequented, the more forcibly to discredit the calumny.

Mrs. Grenby informed her she had traced it, with the assistance of her brother, to Lady Carbreon. Mr. Cosbyne, she said, was so much incensed at the malicious tale, that he had openly reproached her with being the authoress of it. Lady Carbreon supported the charge with admirable composure, and denied that the report originated with her. Mrs. Grenby added, that it was said, she had offered Lord William Dalvening all the consolation in her power, for the mortification he had endured from the rejection of Laure, which he had philosophically accepted, when the first transports of his disappointment had abated.

Madame L'Arminiere, whose only plan was amusement, had readily assented to remain with Madame de Germeil, at Harrowgate; and now, with equal pliability, agreed to stay there, until summoned, by their engagement to Lockyer-Place, to which they had all been invited with infinite eagerness and importunity.

Lady Lockyer remained at Harrowgate until the morning of a day on which she expected, by appointment, a large dinner party at home, and was not able to resist an offered rubber at piquet, while the horses were putting to. She sat down, utterly disregarding the remonstrances of Sir Edward, who was too experimentally certain how the affair would end.

Fitzpier happening to be present, was seized with an inclination to retaliate the uneasiness he had suffered from Sir Edward a few days before; and drew him out of the room, by desiring he would give his opinion of a brace of pointers he offered to conduct him to. The baronet jumped instantly into the trap, and Fitzpier led him to a private stable, when he descanted so long, and with so much energy, on the beauty of the dogs, that before the smallest probability appeared of his making a finale, the rubber was out, and Lady Lockyer looking at her watch, found that scarcely an hour and half remained to travel twenty miles in. The case was urgent—Sir Edward was sought for with the most diligent assiduity. Five—ten minutes elapsed, and every minute seemed an age.

At length, finding that her utmost efforts would not enable her to appear at her own house in tolerable time, unless she sat out instantly, she very gravely left word that Sir Edward was to be sent after her, and the postillions drove on.

When they had galloped four or five miles, the projected departure, with all the inconveniencies of a delay, rushing suddenly into the imagination of Sir Edward, he started in great emotion: his tongue, which had rung a perpetual larum from the moment he had awoke in the morning, stopt as by enchantment; and darting through the stable door, he flew along the road like an old hunter, whose ears are suddenly regaled with a full cry. When he came near the Hotel, and could not discern any signs of the equipage, he immediately comprehended his disaster; and stood revolving in his mind, whether he should endeavour to overtake Lady Lockyer on horseback, or in a hack post-chaise: he would have much preferred the former, but for the unlucky circumstance of never having crossed the back of a horse during the last sixty years of his life.

In the height of his perplexity Fitzpier arrived, who had been put to his utmost speed in following him; and perceiving him in the middle of the road, trembling with anxious impatience, panting—his eyes staring wildly, and his head veering this way and that, as if it were turning on a pivot, exclaimed with a loud laugh, ‘A fine figure! a very fine figure! and a fine intelligent face to crown it withal!’

Sir Edward had just recollection enough left to order a chaise, which the ostler assured him was standing ready in the yard; but at the same time swore, if he were to be kicked from Durham to Dover, he could not find, in the whole place, a horse to draw it. Sir Edward was confounded at this intelligence: and whatever opinion he entertained of the excellence of his cook, every dish of the ill-fated dinner, mangled and disfigured, glided successively before his eyes, like the injured ghosts to the imagination of Richard the Third.

His concern was so much increased by the reflection, that Fitzpier could no longer withstand his distress, and instantly offered his horses and servant to attend him all the way, if he could not get up with the carriage. The proposal was accepted in a transport of thankfulness; and the eagerness of his anxiety to get home, overcoming every difficulty, Sir Edward ventured to seat himself in the saddle.

Of Fitzpier's horses, one was hot and fiery, and the other remarkably quiet; a circumstance that would have given him a capital opportunity of completing the jest in style, by putting Sir Edward in a situation to break his neck: but though he was a young fellow of wit and spirit on most occasions, such a coup de maître never entered his imagination; on the contrary, he was so well satisfied with the little revenge he had already taken, that he really felt interested that Sir Edward should perform the journey in safety.

#### CHAP. XIV.

ADELINE knew that Madame de Germeil had very lately received letters from her father, and to her infinite surprise and chagrin, she was profoundly silent on the subject. Hitherto the Comte had always written either to Mademoiselle D'Ogimond or Laure, when he sent a paquet to England; but in the last they did not appear to be noticed. Reason whispered to Adeline that such a total neglect was strange, but Madame de Germeil's will, more powerful with her than reason, forbade her to complain.

Laure, whose fears and suspicions, excited by the accusations of the Marquis, were almost confirmed by the testimony of concurring circumstances, viewed the conduct of Madame de Germeil with the averted eye of disappointed confidence and repelled esteem, and doubted whether she had not with-held a letter the Comte had meant for her. As she hourly felt an increasing aversion from receiving benefits at the hands of a man whose conduct was repugnant to every principle of rectitude and humanity, after many efforts to overcome her timidity, she had written to him the day of De Saint Ouin's departure, to demand the information she felt every hour more impatient to hear; and concluded by conjuring him, with earnestness, no longer to tax his generosity by continuing her in a situation to which she was sensible she had no claim, either by birth or fortune, but suffer her to return to the humble station from which he had apparently taken her; and averred, with many protestations, that so far from being mortified at such a transition, she should be relieved from the humiliating consciousness, that she was not entitled according to the general opinion of the world, to mix with that part of it which had pretensions to the honor of living in the society of Mademoiselle D'Ogimond.

Laure had given this letter, sealed, to Madame de Germeil, to inclose with her paquet; and as she had often written to the Comte on less interesting occasions, she hoped this letter would be the less remarked by her. From this period Madame de Germeil had treated her with the most chilling indifference, and sometimes with pointed neglect: Laure endured it with philosophy, for she no longer loved her; and could now perceive faults in her, which esteem and gratitude had formerly veiled from her penetration; her conduct added to these, a conviction that Madame could be unjust, and dislike without a cause.

The letter she suspected the Comte to have written her, she supposed not to be of much import, because he could not at the time have received hers; she therefore waited the event of her inquiries in silent suspense, certain that it could not be decided until the Comte's messenger, who was dispatched every fortnight to England, returned again.

Laure sometimes imagined that Madame de Germeil's displeasure arose from the failure of her efforts in making the Duke explain the motive of his attentions: a surmise equally founded on a cessation of her excessive complaisance to him, and a disposition she evinced to rally him on subjects she well knew he was vastly unwilling to have discussed. Laure perceived the restraint that now accompanied the officious solicitude he still continued to exhibit for her, and entertained hopes of being soon entirely exempted from it.

In fact, Madame de Germeil and the Duke had been playing a separate game: he imagined the Comte D'Ogimond's resources must soon fail; and when he first saw Laure, he hoped to procure her upon his own terms, by assisting him to prosecute his ill-digested plans of villany. Madame de Germeil, on the contrary, foreseeing the storm ready to burst on the Comte's head, was eager to obtain for him a support and ally in a country she thought he must necessarily fly to on an emergency. They were both disappointed. The Duke was too crafty to give into her scheme, and soon discerned in Laure a mind too elevated to be induced by any accident or mischance to comply with his.

Madame de Germeil, as a last resort, mentioned to him, with an affectation of distress, the intimation she had received from Mrs. Grenby. The Duke catching eagerly at an opportunity of extricating himself with decency from a situation which began to be extremely irksome to him, lamented very pathetically that he should be the unfortunate, though innocent agent to such a piece of illiberal scandal; and declared that he would render it abortive, by absenting himself from their fascinating society: and in undergoing so cruel a mortification, he should be almost recompensed, by reflecting that it was a sacrifice voluntarily offered by the most respectful attachment, in return for the envied distinction which had called it forth.

Much as Madame de Germeil had disliked his reserve, she was unprepared for such heroic sentiments; and if she acquiesced in them, it was, at least, for five minutes in silence. The Duke profiting by this unexpected effect of her astonishment, retired with a gravity becoming the occasion, sincerely thanking fortune that he had escaped so well. The last seven days had gradually prepared Madame de Germeil for this disappointment; yet she could not endure to be thus baffled in a plan she had originally thought herself sure of succeeding in. Her ill humour and resentment were not to be concealed by any ordinary effort; and her patience, irritated by several recent events, could not enable her to pass this over with her accustomed discretion.

The Duke judged it would be prudent to withdraw as much as possible from the verge of her phillippics; and entered immediately on his sagacious resolution of self-denial, by dining that day with a family, neither very young nor very handsome, consisting of three discreet damsels, and an invalid dowager, their mother, whose society not offering a very alluring prospect, he had hitherto repeatedly neglected their advances. The next morning he found himself under the necessity of paying a long promised visit to a gentleman in the North-Riding; and as the expedition would certainly require two or three days to perform, he told the young ladies he feared he should not have the pleasure of seeing them again until they met at Sir Edward Lockyer's. The young ladies received the intimation with a very decent appearance of regret; but they were not by any means inconsolable in his absence. The intervening time passed quietly on without any incident to disturb them.

Madame de Germeil was not indeed kind to Laure, yet she was now no longer reproved for inattention to the merits of the Duke, which she had often fatigued herself to no purpose to discover.

## CHAP. XV.

AT length they bade adieu to Harrowgate; for Madame de Germeil meant to proceed immediately to London on quitting Lockyer-Place. They were almost the first who arrived there on the Jubilee day, and were received by Sir Edward with all the unfeigned pleasure of genuine hospitality, and he acknowledged with gratitude the honor their presence conferred on him. Such a compliment from the lady of the house would not have appeared superfluous to a person of Mademoiselle's D'Ogimond's rank; but as she depended entirely on her sposo for the ceremonial of receiving her guests, she did not descend amongst them until the dinner was announced.

The company was very numerous, and consisted of a strange, but entertaining, medley. Sir Edward repeated to every young lady individually, that he expected part of the band from York; and hoped, with a most joyous smirk, that they would not have any *serious* objection to a ball in the evening.

Fitzpier advanced to Laure, and secured her promise for two dances before Madame de Germeil could find time to forbid her compliance, had she been disposed to do it.

At seven the music was expected, and a quarter after, Sir Edward began to be very much disconcerted that it did not appear: when the clock struck eight he was half distracted, and ran, with his watch in his hand, from the Terrace to the Drawing-room, from the Drawing-room to the Offices, and from the Offices to the Terrace, alternately. The setting sun gilded the road they were to pass, but no rattling post-chaise struck his eye or saluted his ear. It was as impossible to forbear smiling at his perplexity as it was to pity his mortification. He affirmed with an earnestness of asseveration, that would almost have enforced belief of a Jew, that he had himself engaged the band, and consequently their absence was not occasioned by mistake or negligence on his part.

The last sun-beam dropped beneath the horizon, and carried with it all the hope Sir Edward had still entertained of seeing his tardy Orions. He then returned to the drawing-room in great despondency, having charged some of the servants to keep a look out, and give him instant notice if their approach should be discovered.

Those who had declined dancing retired with great composure to the card-room, exulting perhaps internally, that the younger and more attractive should be deprived of an amusement they were no longer themselves capable of relishing.

The calm however, was soon disturbed by the entrance of a servant, who whispered to the expecting Sir Edward, with many marks of fear and horror, that while John and Joe were listening in the Park for the sound of wheels, they had seen a figure, all in white, carrying a white coffin round the clump of elms.

This intelligence was overheard by a lady, whose husband, an officer, was supposed to have been lost in the Bay of Bengal. She had supported this mournful conjecture of his fate about two months; and withstood with great firmness the intreaties of a young man who solicited to succeed him in her heart; but her scruples had not allowed her to listen to the one, until the death of the other was better ascertained. On hearing the servant's report, a whim instantly seized her that the ghost of the dear deceased had indulgently taken this method of convincing her of the reality of his death, that she might comply with her own wishes and those of her lover, and was at that moment about to appear before her. The idea was not entirely an unwelcome one; yet the terror that naturally accompanied it, and perhaps a spark of affection revived by this delicate proof of posthumous attention to her happiness, made her shriek violently for a minute, and then, with the usual gradations, fall into strong convulsions.

Every body was astonished, and the exclamation observed on these occasions, flew round the room very fast; but no answer could be returned to the universal cry of 'What is it? What is the matter?' for Sir Edward had slipped away to learn more of the story.

Lady Lockyer repeatedly rung for assistance, and no one appeared to receive her commands: surprised at this unusual neglect she withdrew to discover the cause of it. Every place was empty; she called several times; no answer was returned: she then took a light, and went up stairs; every thing there was equally solitary. She returned to her company in some consternation, at the instant the affrighted widow recovered sufficiently to declare the reason of her terrors, and to ask if her late husband had not entered the room, carrying a white coffin. This question struck a panic into some of her audience, whilst the rest supposed her intellects were suddenly deranged. Every body now looked round for Sir Edward, who had not yet re-appeared, and were seized with fresh wonder at the tale Lady Lockyer related.

Some of the gentlemen rushed out to learn what had happened: of these was Fitzpier, whose curiosity and expectation of amusement from the dénouement were raised to the highest pitch. They ran into the Park; the moon shone very bright, and they soon discovered Sir Edward at the head of a troop of servants, male and female; for not only the domestics of the family, but of every guest, had run out to see the ghost; most of them induced by curiosity, and the rest because they were afraid of being left behind.

The whole party seemed to be dancing the Heyes, for nobody would have stood on the outside if they could have prevailed upon another to do it. Fitzpier, who was the first that joined them, demanded of Sir Edward, how much of the enemy's motions he had discovered since he had occupied that post?

'Bless me!' returned the Baronet, who was strongly tinctured with superstition, 'this is the strangest thing!—I certainly saw the figure and the coffin, as plainly as I see you. Surely it can't be a thief! What should he be lugging about a coffin for?'

'There it is! there it is!' they all cried.

Fitzpier advanced towards the ghost, and hailed it. 'God bless you!' returned the spirit, 'do tell me where I am. I am fainting with thirst and fatigue. The devil fetch me if I have not been wandering nine or ten miles, with my d—d instrument, case and all, upon my shoulders!'

Notwithstanding the tone of distress with which this was uttered, Fitzpier could not restrain an immoderate fit of laughter, which being heard by Sir Edward and his followers, who had still kept aloof, they all ran to the place, and discovered in the object of their terror, an unhappy individual of the expected York band, stripped of his coat and waistcoat, which hung on his arm, and the white coffin a viol de Gamba, in a deal case.

Sir Edward first questioned him, with great eagerness, on the cause of his disappointment, and then inquired how he came there, and where his companions were? The man disburthening his shoulders of the white coffin, replied very humbly, that he would relate their mischance; but begged first to have something to drink, and to be permitted to sit down.

When his request was complied with, he told Sir Edward that he had set out with his companions at three o'clock, in two post-chaises; but at the last stage, the only post-boy who knew the way to Lockyer-Place was in liquor; and when they got on the moor, on the other side of the Park, he turned out of the road, on pretence of taking a short cut, and drove into a large bog; and the other chaise following the first very rapidly, stuck fast before they discovered the mistake. They all contrived, he said, to scramble over in safety; but found it impossible to extricate the first chaise and horses, and in trying to free the other, the harness and traces were broken, so as to render them useless. The post-boys and his companions returned to the last post-town they came through, which was not more than a mile and a half from the scene of their disaster; and as his instrument was so heavy and troublesome to carry, and he did not chuse to leave it behind him, he agreed to be the person left on the moor to watch the chaises, till they returned in others. After waiting two hours, and not seeing any thing of them, he took his viol on his back, and marched the same way they had appeared to take. He soon lost himself; and rambling about until he was heartily tired, he entered the Park, and keeping the strait road, instead of turning off to the house, he found himself going out at another gate. Puzzled and bewildered, the twilight just coming on, he had measured back his steps, and again lost his path. He added, that he discovered Sir Edward and the servants, but the moon at that instant getting behind a cloud, he had mistaken them for a herd of deer.

At this observation Fitzpier's laugh returned with redoubled violence, in which he was joined by the whole company, who had assembled to hear the story, the widow excepted, who found herself so much indisposed and chagrined, at having exposed herself so unmercifully, and at the uncertainty in which she was again plunged, that she ordered her carriage, and went immediately home. In passing the clump of elms she could not forbear throwing a sidelong glance of inquiry; but not a speck of white appeared to confirm her yet existing expectation.

The wandering son of Apollo had scarcely finished his narrative, when his companions arrived in much better condition than himself. They directly attacked him for quitting his post on the moor, where they had been two hours hallooing and searching for him. He asked, in his turn, why they made him stay such a confounded time, broiling in the sun, and parched with thirst, while they were, most likely, amusing themselves over a bottle.

At this hint, which was in part well founded, and closely followed up by a torrent of reproaches from the knight of the white coffin, every man began his separate defence, with such eagerness and vociferation, that the bystanders were deafened with the clamour. In short, they never made a more hideous noise even in tuning their instruments in a concert-room for the edification of the audience.

At length Sir Edward obtained silence, by desiring them to refresh themselves, and repair immediately to the ball-room, where the delay their disaster occasioned was forgotten in the laugh it excited. Sir Edward rubbed his hands; and to every gratulation on the conclusion of his troubles, crowed out with infinite satisfaction, ‘Ay, ay, better late than never; better late than never.’

Fitzpier did not fail to claim Laure’s promised hand; and took an opportunity to inform her that he had received a letter from De Saint Ouïn, dated from Dover, written while he waited for the vessel that was to convey him to Calais. ‘He meant to have left Valain in England,’ continued Fitzpier, ‘but I persuaded him I should be as faithful, and probably more useful to him. As I am an idle fellow, I intend to employ the rest of the week in sauntering up to London; perhaps I shall be there almost as soon as you; and if Madame will not allow me the honour of seeing you in Park-Lane, I may be fortunate enough to meet you sometimes elsewhere.’

Laure, who felt an increasing regard for Fitzpier, was not displeased at the intimation. She listened to his account of De Saint Ouïn with silent attention, but resolutely denied herself the satisfaction of speaking of him. Fitzpier observed this circumstance, and instantly dropped the subject.

The Duke of Harmington entered very late in the evening: he paid his compliments to Madame de Germeil and the young ladies with unusual zeal and respect: but though importuned by Sir Edward to sleep at Lockyer-Place, he chose to slip away at one o’clock, and before he was missed by half the party, had travelled twenty miles.

Laure rejoiced internally at being delivered from his gallantry; yet had she been allowed the privilege of extracting amusement from it, she would have found it more laughable than vexatious; but while Madame de Germeil continued his champion, she had been obliged to listen to him with affected complacency, and repress the mirth his absurdities would have extorted from a stoic.

## CHAP. XVI.

THE next morning the four ladies sat out for London, where they arrived in safety the third day. Mrs. Grenby happened to be still at Wincale, and flew to them immediately. In a tête à tête with her friend, the subject of the Duke's attentions was discussed, and Madame de Germeil suppressing her own plan and discomfiture, gave such a detail of them, that Mrs. Grenby, for a fortnight after, could never preserve her gravity when she reflected on it.

The town was very empty; but Madame de Germeil chose to remain there, as she expected hourly a summons from the Comte to return to Paris, where her talents, and the beauty of Laure, were much wanted, to counterbalance the effects of the proceedings against him, planned by the old Marquis de Saint Ouïn, with so much prudence, and executed with so much vigour, that little doubt now remained on the public mind of the innocence of his son in that fatal affair, which stamp'd the family of Saint Ouïn enemies of the Comte D'Ogimond for ever.

It was proved by them, that this fell villain, who was indeed ever ready primed with mischief, which his erring head and coward hand sometimes failed to perform, had proposed to the young Marquis to murder Lamalaige; and finding the instigation rejected with the highest indignation and horror, and the young man's friendship and esteem forfeited for ever, urged equally by fear and revenge, had procured a wretch to commit the atrocious act, and then accuse and arrest De Saint Ouïn, as the murderer; who would not have had time given him to explain the matter, because being a Noble, and the unhappy Lamalaige of the tiers etat, the populace would not have permitted him to be conducted alive to prison; and if unexpectedly they should have been inclined to spare him, the Comte's agent was directed to make a scuffle, and dispatch the young Marquis on pretence of his having attempted to escape.

This diabolical scheme was, however, in part disconcerted. When Valain gave his master the letter, in which the Comte explained himself, he remained for some purpose in the room; but his attention was soon diverted from his occupation, to the emotion that agitated the Marquis whilst he read it, who sat for some time motionless: at length, starting up in an ecstasy of rage, he tore the paper, and throwing it from him with violence, darted out of the room. He returned however in two minutes, but it was no longer where he had left it: he questioned Valain, who answered in great confusion, that as Monsieur le Marquis had torn the letter and thrown it away, he had had the misfortune to think it of no further use, and as it littered the place, he had put the pieces in the fire. The Marquis, too much agitated to attend to the improbability of his excuse, and imagining his embarrassment arose from having destroyed the paper, mal-apropos, told him he had done well.

Valain was a great favourite with De Saint Ouïn; he had served him from a boy with the utmost zeal and fidelity: he knew the letter was from the Comte, whom he had always detested, and was afraid the young Marquis would be entrapped into some

mischief; for he had been told of an *illustrious young man*, who had been insidiously allured to ruin by the pernicious influence of the Comte's society and example.

Valain's attachment to his master coinciding with his curiosity, had induced him to snatch up the letter, which he meant to read, and replace where he found it; but the sudden return of the Marquis prevented him: yet he had already seen enough to confirm his suspicions of the Comte, and hastily put the detestable scrawl in his pocket.

The more Valain considered the subject of the letter, and the disappointment of those hopes the Comte had formed, the more his apprehensions increased for the safety of his master, which he thought would be highly endangered by remaining where he was, and he often ventured to remind him that he generally at that season of the year was accustomed to visit his father. De Saint Ouïn was much more inclined to visit England and Laure; for when he thought of the opinion she would entertain of him from the representations of the Comte, he was more than half distracted. In one of his paroxysms he determined to indulge his inclination; and his impatience not admitting the delay of a minute, he directed Valain to execute a few commissions, and follow him post to Ostend. He then sat out, though it was almost dark, attended by one servant.

Valain was preparing to depart the next morning, when he was prevented by the arrival of an enraged mob, who beset the house, and demanded the Marquis with loud shouts. Some of the people soon rushed in, accompanied by a guard, who inquired for his master. Valain coolly replied, that he did not exactly know his route, but he believed he was gone to Brittany. They would not credit the assertion; and after having searched every place in vain, returned to the spot where he was left, with some of the party to guard him, and broke open a box, in which Valain had just packed some cloaths belonging to De Saint Ouïn: they found in it two letters addressed to him, not yet unsealed, which had arrived only an hour before: one of them, which was read aloud, reproached him vehemently for conceiving a design so base, as that he had manifested towards Lamalaige; and contained many supplications not to engage in an act so barbarous and dishonourable. The signature Valain was unacquainted with, but he easily discovered the disguised writing of the Comte.

In the interim the other letter had been seized by a man who was remarkably officious in searching for the Marquis: it was taken from his reluctant hand, and appeared to be dated five days before the other, and signed by the Count D'Ogimond. He reproached De Saint Ouïn with pusillanimity and want of friendship, in refusing to perform what he had requested of him; and alluding to the letter Valain at that instant happened to have in his pocket, 'Remember,' he said, 'that if you are a man of honour, the letter of the 16<sup>th</sup> is destroyed.'

Whilst the paper was reading, the fellow who had first taken possession of it, called vehemently to the guard to continue the search, observing that it was almost impossible the Marquis could be out of the town; or if he were, it would be proper to inquire which of the gates he had passed through, that he might be traced; alledging that his flight was every proof of guilt that could be required.

Valain having learnt the purport of the accusation, strenuously asserted his master's innocence, though at the hazard of his own life; and taking from his pocket the letter he had so fortunately preserved, gave it to the officer who commanded the guard, and desired him to compare it with the others, and he would find they were all written by the same person: it would illustrate too, the request which the Marquis was reproached for refusing to comply with.

Valain demanded when the murder was committed? and was answered, that Lamalaige had been seen walking on the Esplanade at five in the morning; and it was supposed the atrocious deed had been done soon after. He then triumphantly desired they would take the trouble of inquiring at the gates, and they would find that his master had quitted the town the preceding evening.

The same fellow who had been so active in the accusation and search, remarked with a malicious sneer, that the affair might have been performed by deputy. However as the mob could not be immediately gratified, by tearing the supposed offender to pieces, some of them admitted that he might possibly be innocent; and in a short time they dispersed very quietly, leaving the guard to continue their search and execute their office, without favouring them with any further assistance.

Valain remained unmolested until evening; and then began his journey, first making a circuit to mislead any one who might be inclined to follow him. He arrived at Ostend in safety, and was directed to proceed to Dover, where he would find the Marquis, who had thus flown from the danger he was not aware of. And that very ardour of attachment which the Comte meant to disappoint, even while he unfeelingly encouraged it to assist his views, occasioned them to be baffled thus fatally for his peace and reputation.

## CHAP. XVII.

MRS. GRENBY prevailed with Madame de Germeil and the young ladies to pass a few days at Wincale; and it was announced to be a farewell visit. Mr. Cosbyne was not there: his sister told her guests that he was making the tour of France and Italy, both for amusement and the recovery of his health, which had been a little impaired.

And here they learnt that Lady Carbreon, accompanying a party on the water, without any prudent addition to her usual habiliments, had caught a violent cold, and lost the use of those limbs she had been so forward to exhibit.

Madame de Germeil received the mandate she was expecting immediately on her return to London. Calling to take leave of one of the few families they had any knowledge of, who yet remained in Town, they met Fitzpier, who was surprised at the news of their sudden departure. His adieus to Madame de Germeil were rather cold; but as he conducted Laure to the carriage, he told her that he felt a strange regret at being obliged so quickly to relinquish the sight of her; yet if the result of her leaving England were to be advantageous to the Marquis, he would try to overcome it.

She bade him farewell with a sweetness of concern that made the task still more difficult; and when the coach drove from the door, after following it sometime with his eye, he walked home without his hat.

Madame de Germeil sighed that she was obliged thus to quit England with the design that had brought her thither still unaccomplished. She had hoped either from the rank and reputed fortune of Mademoiselle D'Ogimond, or the powerful charms of the admired Laure, to have procured an alliance in this country, that would have proved essentially useful to the Comte.

She had sacrificed Lord William Dalvening to the fancied attachment of the Duke of Harmington, whom she wished to encourage in preference to almost any other candidate: and at the moment she discovered her mistake with respect to his designs, she was obliged to relinquish the pursuit, and repair by her personal efforts, the alarming effects of the perverse obstinacy with which the Comte neglected her counsel, to follow the dictates of his own wilful imbecility.

Adeline conceived only pleasure at the idea of returning to her father, while Laure was overwhelmed with perplexity and confusion, when she thought of her approaching meeting with the Comte, who had not deigned to take the least notice of her appeal to him, and for whom she felt her horror and disgust hourly increase.

Madame de Germeil travelled in silence, apparently in the deepest contemplation. When they arrived at ——, about forty miles north of Paris, in returning to the carriage after taking some refreshment, she was stopt by a party of National Guards, who affirmed that Mademoiselle D'Ogimond and herself were prisoners.

‘Impossible!’ exclaimed Madame de Germeil with trembling astonishment, ‘by what authority?’ ‘That of the National Convention,’ they replied. She seemed thunder-struck; but instantly recovering herself, desired to see the principal magistrate of the place. This request was with some reluctance complied with.

Adeline was carried thither in a state of insensibility, and Laure followed in silent agony.

They were escorted to the house of the Magistrate, who was likewise a Priest; and Madame de Germeil leaving Adeline to the care of Laure and the attendants, repaired to the presence of the great man, who looking at her with an air of authority as she entered, did not condescend to rise from his seat, but evinced his knowledge of the laws of good breeding only by a gentle inclination of the head.

His gouvernante, though a very important personage in his family, had not yet assumed any of the concomitants of sudden elevation; and was vastly civil to the young ladies, whose situation she thought requiring attention and commiseration, she offered them hers, with a hearty good will; but the beauty and condescension of Laure soon gained her the pre-eminence in Madelon’s favour, and she addressed to her most of her consolatory compliments.

Madame de Germeil’s own femme de chambre and Laure’s maid, who were following in another carriage, arrived at —— during Madame’s conference with the Abbé. They instantly learnt what had happened, and were conducted, at their own request, to their ladies.

The moment Madame de Germeil’s woman appeared before Madelon, she first examined her very attentively, and then springing upon her with wonderful agility, screamed out, ‘Give me my child! Where is my child? You shan’t move a step till you have given up my beautiful child. It did not belong to you—I’ll take you to Monsieur L’Abbé, and you shall be made to confess where you have put my sweet child—I thought such a powerful sweet baby didn’t belong to you. Madame de Brience came for her a year after you had her, and if it hadn’t been for you, I should have had my fortune made, and all for the sake of my beautiful nursling!’

The femme de chambre had not power to answer these furious interrogations: she was too respectable a woman in the opinion of every one present to incur the suspicion of being a kidnapper of children, and her agitation might have been the effect of surprise as well as any other emotion. However the uproar made by Madelon drew the Abbé himself and all his auditors to the spot, where her tongue, which did not appear to the by-standers either stiff or paralytic, soon informed them of what the culprit was accused.

The Abbé commanded silence; but Madelon was never so much inclined to disobey him, and continued her accusation with unwearied perseverance and obstinacy.

‘She came to me one day in the spring,’ said the gouvernante, ‘fifteen years ago: I remember her ugly face well enough; and said she was sent by the father of the child to fetch it away. I should never have believed her to be sure, only she brought with her a powerful heap of crowns, and then I thought it must be true; but no such thing. Here truly a year after came to my cottage Madame Duchess de Brience — No — I mean Madame Brience, for she is no Duchess now, and said the sweet child was her grand-daughter; and then I was ready to kill myself that I had let this old ape have it;—for to be sure Madame Brience offered me any money to let her know where the nursling was—and I can send to her now—so do you be pleased to tell Monsieur L’Abbé where my child is.’

‘Peace, Madelon,’ cried the Abbé. ‘—Who is this woman? What child does she talk of?’

‘My child, my nursling!’ screamed Madelon, ‘who was never christened that I heard of, and so I called her Louise.’

‘And who were her parents?’ demanded he.

‘That I don’t know,’ said the gouvernante. ‘My mother used at that time to carry cream and butter to Paris every morning; and a number of great houses she went to; for they all said her butter was very good. God bless her. I used to help make it before I married Louis Duhamel—and when I came to have a child, my mother asked wherever she went, if any of the grand people wanted a wet-nurse: they all said no, but I suppose some of them did, for a little while after, I had this child brought to me, and money enough to keep it, bless its little heart! for a power of time.’

‘Why then,’ interrupted the Abbé, ‘if you are not certain to whom it belonged, perhaps this woman may have had a right to claim it.’

‘No, Sir, if you please, not!’ exclaimed Madelon, ‘it was grand-daughter to Madame de Brience.’

‘Sir,’ said Madame de Germeil impatiently, ‘will you be pleased to defer hearing this person’s detail, until you have listened to what I was about to have the honour of saying to you before we were interrupted?’

‘Monsieur L’Abbé shan’t go,’ cried the gouvernante, ‘till he has made this ugly wolf confess what she has done with Louise.’

Unhappily the countenance thus apostrophized had some resemblance to the animal mentioned; and this epithet added to the preceding ones, entirely upset the patience of the femme de chambre. Such a storm of rage ensued, that the voices of the two women sounded more like a peal of discordant bells, jingled by unskilful ringers, than the delightful organ of harmony and reason, belonging to a pair of the softer sex.

The lady of the bed-chamber in the course of her vindication, asserted that she had taken the child from nurse by the order of the father, as she had told the woman at the time, and she could prove it to any body.

‘What absurdity!’ exclaimed Madame de Germeil; ‘will it not be soon enough to vindicate yourself when you are accused by those who have a right to arraign your conduct?’

‘Pardon me, Madame,’ replied the femme de chambre, ‘but I cannot bear to be so called by such an one as she, for all the rights in the world. I am no more an ugly wolf than she is: and you, Madame, know very well, I did not steal the child as she says.’

‘Take down that woman’s deposition,’ said the Abbé, in a magisterial tone, to a man who acted as his secretary, or clerk.

‘And do you really, Monsieur L’Abbé, treat this affair seriously?’ cried Madame de Germeil. ‘At least I hope you will first have the goodness—’

‘Madame,’ interrupted he, ‘I shall do myself the honour of treating you with all the civility in my power, until I find it convenient to have you conveyed to Paris. Meantime I must inform you, that the National Convention, when it appointed me an humble administrator of justice, supposed me incapable of employing my time and attention on frivolous objects.’

Madame de Germeil finding the man at once proud and imbecile, instead of reasoning, soothed him with all the persuasion she was mistress of; but could only obtain the favour of being heard immediately after the examination of Mademoiselle Bridonette, her woman; who was ushered into the chamber her lady had just quitted, and Madelon followed without much entreaty.

## CHAP. XVIII.

MADAME DE GERMEIL remained with the young ladies in a state of perturbation and anxiety that would have excited interest in a mind far more unfeeling than that of Laure; who forgetting all the coldness and dislike with which she had lately been treated, shared her grief, and consoled her with inimitable delicacy and tenderness.

Madame de Germeil was not insensible to her attentions; but much as she was accustomed to repress every emotion, she gave way at this instant, to her anguish, and wept.

A sight so unusual, drew the trembling Adeline to her side, who hanging over her in an agony, sobbed with violence: yet she knew but half her misfortune; for Madame de Germeil had learnt from the Abbé, that the Comte D'Ogimond was then in confinement, without a hope of being again liberated.

She soon however recovered from a softness so uncommon to her, and was endeavouring to gain composure, when Madelon's voice from the next room, saluted her ear, with that kind of tone that *will* be heard. 'Jesu Maria!' said she, 'why then she is my sweet child, my little Louise!' and darting into the room with violence, she ran to Laure, and surveying her eagerly, from head to foot, embraced her with an extravagance of joy that knew no bounds.

Her imagination converting, in an instant, the beautiful girl again into the pretty nursling, she called out in a manner something between singing and screaming, 'You shall go directly to Madame Brience—I will take you myself to Madame Brience, your grand-mamma.'

'The woman doats,' said Madame de Germeil, 'how can she be so related to Madame Brience, whose only offspring is the Countess D'Ogimond!'

'But she was not always her only child,' observed the Abbé, who had again emerged from his audience-room.

'I should rather suppose, Sir,' answered she with great deference, 'that this young lady was born after the event that made her so.'

'However that may be,' cried the Abbé, in a tone of decision, 'I shall take charge of this young person until I receive instructions from the Convention in what manner to dispose of her.'

Laure had attended to this scene from the entrance of Madelon in a violent conflict of emotions, that took from her the power of utterance and motion, yet left her sense enough to hear the discussion. At the close of the Abbé's speech she sunk back in her chair, in an agony not to be described. To be left in the power of a man she knew

nothing of—to be torn from her beloved Adeline, now that she was in distress—and to be at the disposal of a set of people, who might not allow her to claim the protection of her natural friends, when she might indulge a hope of being acknowledged by them, were circumstances that filled her mind with terror and despondency. Adeline almost equally moved, threw herself at the feet of the Priest, and entreated that Laure might not be taken from her: while Madame de Germeil, discovering that she had to deal with a man who possessed some power but no feeling, received his fiat in silence, and declined any further conference with him.

She was then, with Mademoiselle D'Ogimond, escorted back to the inn, from whence they were to be conducted to Paris. Laure was prevented from following them, not without some violence, and Madelon then set about consoling her with all her might.

‘Diantre,’ cried she; ‘my sweet Miss Louise, if I was in your place, I would not care for that proud woman full of great words, nor t’other cup of milk and water that’s with her: why Madame Brience will take care of you, she will be glad to do it, I’m sure she will, for she cried when you was not to be found, here fourteen years ago, when she came to me; and I was obliged to swear before the Bailly that I didn’t know where that ugly thing had taken you. To be sure she might well cry; for it was just after her son, the Prince of Lamare, died, and he led a sad rakish life; and they said it was all along of somebody I shan’t mention, who married his sister, and then he thought to have all the money when the old ones died: but there’s one of ’em not dead yet, and certain I am she will take care of her son’s child.’

‘How did you learn,’ said Laure with impatience;—‘are you sure I am the Prince of Lamare’s daughter?’

‘Ay, sure,’ cried Madelon. ‘Madame Brience told me so herself, to make me confess where you was hid. Bless her! she could not tell that I should have been as glad to have known as she, every bit.’

‘And for what purpose,’ asked Laure, ‘did Mademoiselle Bridonette remove me from you—by whose direction?’

‘Why she says the Comte D'Ogimond sent her by the Prince’s order; but Lord! it was no such thing; for Monsieur Lamare thought when he died that you was at nurse with me, and so he told Madame Brience, his mother.’

‘I wish I could have the honour of seeing Madame Brience!’ said Laure thoughtfully.

‘And so you shall,’ cried Madelon.

Busied in conjecturing what would be her fate, Laure did not hear this affirmation; and the gouvernante was prevented from repeating it by the entrance of Monsieur L’Abbé, who was graciously pleased to direct her to accommodate properly the

*young person* who had thus unwillingly become his guest. He was rather advanced in years, and had never been a passionate admirer of beauty in any part of his life, so that the charms of Laure were not certainly the motive that induced him to take particular cognisance of her situation. He had been partly influenced to it to gratify Madelon, who was in his opinion an excellent cook and housewife; but principally to pique Madame de Germeil, who had, about ten years before, disoblged him very seriously, by rejecting, with contempt, his offered services as Lieutenant Pedagogue to the Comte's sons. An unlucky circumstance she certainly was not aware of, when she conceived the project of appealing to him, against the superfluous ceremony of being escorted the rest of her journey by forty or fifty horsemen.

When Madelon had dispatched the important business of preparing her master's supper, she instantly returned to Laure, who refused to partake of it, and took up the conversation with infinite dexterity and exactness, where she had broken off.

——‘And you shall see Madame Brience, my sweet child,’ cried she; ‘I’ll manage our Abbé, notwithstanding what he says of the Convention; for what has the Convention to do with you or your grand-mamma. I am sure there was no Convention when you was born, that I heard of. Lord! I used to put you on our jack-ass, and take you with me when I went to my old aunt’s. I think I can see that pretty little face now, peeping out of one pannier, and the basket that carried our dinner in the other. I little thought then, you would be all at once such a beautiful young lady, and Madame Brience’s grand-daughter.’

‘Do not give me that appellation yet, my good Madelon,’ said Laure, ‘for I shall never have the presumption to think it, until that Lady herself acknowledges me; but tell me Nurse, if you will permit me to call you so—’

‘That I will, my little heart!’ cried Madelon in raptures, ‘that I will!’

——‘Well my dear Nurse, did Bridonette say how I was disposed of, when I was taken from you?’

‘Why then you was sent to Languedoc, by the Comte D’Ogimond, to a sister of hers, for three years; and after that, this sister went to live at Chaillot, and there you staid until you was taken to the Chateau de Verni.’

‘And did she mention,’ asked Laure eagerly, ‘why the Comte acted thus?’

‘Why Monsieur L’Abbé asked her; but she said she did not know; and so then he made her write her name to all she had been owning: and truly Madame would not do it at first, but he soon made her.’

‘And would you, Nurse,’ said Laure, ‘if I write to Madame de Brience, would you contrive to send the letter for me?’

‘No, no,’ cried Madelon frowning, ‘no such thing: you must not do any thing without consulting Monsieur L’Abbé; and I warrant we’ll get him to write to her himself, instead of writing to the Convention. For you must know,’ continued Madelon, looking very significantly, ‘that he is easy enough dealt with when the guard folks are gone, and he has had his supper.’

This seasonable information a little calmed the terrors of Laure on her own account; but she yet feared Madame de Brience would not think the confession of Bridonette a sufficient authority for acknowledging her supposed grand-child.

When she retired to rest, having learnt from the Abbé of the imprisonment and disgrace of the Comte, she paid a tribute of tears to the misery of Adeline, and wept too that she could not shed them with her.

The next day verified the assertion of Madelon; for the Divine Magistrate, or rather the Magisterial Divine, actually sent a letter to Madame de Brience, which had been originally meant for the Convention, enclosing in it a copy of Mademoiselle Bridonette’s narrative.

Madelon exulted in the success of her persuasives, and becoming quite certain that every thing would move in concert with her wishes, almost lost her wits with joys; and put the natural sweetness of Laure’s temper to a most extravagant test, by introducing her to all her neighbours and companions, by no means a small number: of the inconveniencies she suffered in a situation so new and unpleasant, this was the most intolerable; yet it would certainly have been impolitic to have repelled the uncouth endearments of Madame la Gouvernante, and independent of this idea, Laure was incapable of slighting the honesty of affection, which though it ebullates whimsically, and is inconvenient in its effects, claims perhaps a superior share of gratitude, to the most courtly refinement of delicate attention. She endured it then as an unavoidable evil, with patience and even complacency.

When she was allowed time for reflection, she sometimes abandoned herself to the terror of being cast on the world, unprotected, desolate and forlorn; then admitted the soft hope of being cherished by a friend, attached to her by nature as well as affection; and again rejected the idea as too flattering an illusion, for with it she could not forbear connecting De Saint Ouïn and happiness. She hoped, from the hints the Abbé had thrown out in her presence, that the Comte’s arrest was not in consequence of the enmity, or accusations of the Marquis’s family; and pleased herself with thinking they had little, if any share in his disgrace.

Her imagination was bewildered in conjecturing the motive of the Comte for so cruelly withdrawing her from the knowledge of the Duchess de Brience; for she could not persuade herself, the portion that would have been allotted her as a natural child, could have had any weight or influence with a man of the Comte’s immense fortune.

## CHAP. XIX.

BURIED in reflection, Laure was revolving in her mind the occurrences of the last week, when a voice struck her ear, which effectually put an end to her reverie. It inquired of Madelon for her master, who happened to be from home; and at the instant Laure recollected the accents of Mr. Cosbyne, he was ushered into the room by the officious Madelon, with many assurances that Monsieur L'Abbé would not detain him long.

When he saw Laure he started, and seemed for a minute motionless with astonishment; but making an effort to recover himself, he advanced into the room, and in a faltering voice, uttered something she was too much confused either to hear or understand, and her salutation was equally unintelligible to him. At length he stammered out, 'The pleasure of seeing Mademoiselle D'Aubigny is so unexpected, that I am afraid—I believe—I—'

'Diantre,' cried Madelon; and so you know my beautiful Louise! Who would have thought it? Why I fancied you to have been some travelling gentleman she had never seen before, and so I thought while you was waiting a bit for Monsieur L'Abbé, you could be telling her some travelling story, or a crumb of news, or something or other—but where now can you two have met? for our Louise is just come from England, and you just want to be going there.'

At this interrogation Mr. Cosbyne looked very much embarrassed in spite of every effort to appear otherwise: while Madelon gazed at him with infinite hilarity, fully expecting a circumstantial answer. He turned however to Laure, and scarcely knowing what he said, inquired for Madame de Germeil and Mademoiselle D'Ogimond. She was unable to articulate a reply; but Madelon amply made up the deficiency by vociferating, 'Oh, Diantre! they are safe enough at Paris by this time; and I hope they will be kept there, and not be suffered to run all about into foreign countries, taking other people's children with them.'

Laure had perhaps as little pride or vanity in her composition as ever fell to the share of woman; but it was not in human nature to support her present situation unmoved. He appeared much concerned at her evident emotion, and in terms of the highest respect, entreated her to pardon the error he had committed in thus intruding upon her, he feared very unseasonably. 'I will call again,' continued he, 'for the passport I was directed to obtain here, and perhaps if you should then be disengaged, you will allow me to inquire if you have any commands to England.'

Mr. Cosbyne was retiring; but Laure making an effort to speak, he returned.

'I ought to beg your pardon,' she murmured in a low voice, 'for thus suffering my concern to overcome me; but the accident that separated me from Madame de Germeil—from Adeline—'

‘It is a very good accident,’ interrupted Madelon. ‘Jesus Mâtere! sure you are not sorry to find your grand-mamma, after you have been taken from her here a matter of fifteen years last St. John’s day; I think it a clever accident that brings you back again.’

Cosbyne had borne this interruption very impatiently, and looked at Laure as if he wished her to proceed; but the speech of Madelon had entirely chased the small degree of courage that had animated her to begin a kind of explanation; and it was with difficulty she restrained her tears. Observing the conflict, he respectfully withdrew; and in the afternoon Laure received from her maid the following note:

“I have heard, with infinite regret, the accident that has befallen Mademoiselle D’Aubigny’s friends; but I have the consolation of learning at the same time, that it is imagined the restraint they experience at this moment will not be of long duration. I intend remaining at this place some days, and if Mademoiselle D’Aubigny will do me the honor to recollect and communicate to me any occasion on which I can be of the smallest utility to her, she will confer a singular favour on her most devoted humble servant,

“H. COSBYNE.”

Laure thought his conduct so delicate and friendly, that while her answer declined his offered services, she yet expressed her sense of it in terms highly gratifying.

The next day Mr. Cosbyne waited until he found the Abbé had again gone out, and then called on his passport business. But Madelon, offended that he had not noticed her the day before, did not a second time introduce him to her Louise; and he was obliged to solicit very earnestly to-day for what had been so unexpectedly offered him yesterday.

The moment Laure saw him, she expressed her gratitude for the contents of his note; yet assured him that no exigency in her affairs obliged her at that time to call forth his polite attentions.

‘I am most happy to hear it,’ he returned; ‘but at any future moment, may I hope you will recollect how happy any commands from you would make me.’ Laure bowed; and after a pause, informed him she had had the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Grenby very lately in perfect health; for that the last day but one she had passed in England, had been in her society.

‘She must have felt her good fortune very much embittered,’ returned he with a sigh, ‘by the idea of so speedy a separation!’

The return of the Abbé now interrupted the conference; and Laure withdrew, not at all displeased at being released from a conversation, which to support required more serenity than she was then mistress of. Mr. Cosbyne staid some time with Monsieur L’Abbé, who was so much pleased with him, that he consented to dine at his Hotel; where the hospitable Englishman lost no ground in his favour. In return, the Priest insisted that his entertainer should partake of his soup the next day. The invitation was

not forgotten, and had the Abbé possessed any observation, he would have then discovered the source of the wonderful respect he was so much delighted with. Laure was present, and Mr. Cosbyne nearly forgot more than once that any other person was in the room. But the Abbé had not the absurd objection some people entertain, of talking without being answered; on the contrary, he scarcely ever required such an effort from his auditors, and was satisfied with a few equivocal proofs of attention, which might very well be bestowed, without diverting the imagination from any subject that chanced to occupy it.

The day was spent by the Abbé very much to his satisfaction, in talking—by Cosbyne, in gazing—and by Laure, in counting the hours and minutes as they passed, and congratulating herself that her suspense was so much nearer to a conclusion.

At length the messenger returned with letters from the Duchess de Brience: Laure was told of it; but permitted to feel, at least half an hour, all the agitation and terror such a crisis must unavoidably occasion, before the Priest thought fit to inform her of the contents of the packet.

The phlegmatic animal then presented her a letter very gravely, without uttering a syllable. His manner led her to expect that she was rejected and disowned: her heart failed, and she became very faint; while the letter remained unopened in her trembling hand.

Madelon, who had been to market, returned at this moment; and seeing the messenger, flew hastily to hear the news he brought. She burst into the room, with her apron full of roots and herbs, and a string of onions in her right hand: immediately discerning the situation of Laure's mind, 'Jesus Mâtere!' cried she in a tone of vexation, 'what's the matter?'

Laure's emotions, which had been hardly supportable, were now relieved by tears; and Madelon conjecturing the cause, blubbered an accompaniment, with such a storm of concern, that the Abbé raised his voice several times in vain.

When the hurricane subsided, he desired to know if she was frantic; and turning to Laure, 'Why are you thus discomposed, child?' said he. 'When you read your letter, you will find a more ample subject for joy than grief, in the affection Madame Brience expresses for you, and in her inclination to acknowledge you as her relation. Indeed,' continued he, not observing the effect of his speech upon Laure, 'she could not act otherwise, after I had taken the trouble to explain what she ought to do.'

'Sainte Vierge!' exclaimed Madelon, 'why then it goes right after all! God bless you, Monsieur L'Abbé, for bringing it to pass.' And letting slip the lower part of her apron, which was gathered up in her hand, cabbages, carrots, sorrel, garlic, and sage, were scattered about the room in great profusion; while a large turnip, with ponderous gravity, fell on her master's jutting corn; but heedless of the confusion, Madelon threw her arms round his neck, in a most indecorous transport, and fixing the onions just under

his nose, he struggled hard to disengage himself; the effort occasioned a large pin in her sleeve to assault his shoulder with a violence that made him shriek with the smart, and tore his cassock, which was rather old and infirm, from top to bottom. Yet scarcely perceiving the effect of her unlimited ecstasy, she quitted the Abbé, with his torn cassock, and his eyes overflowing with water, and running to Laure, whose attention was engrossed by the letter she was reading, embraced her with a transport that had nearly suffocated her.

## CHAP. XX.

MADAME DE BRIENCE had received intelligence from the Comte D'Ogimond of the existence of her son's daughter; which he had communicated in a paroxysm of rage against the amiable and unhappy Comtess, his wife. A formal separation had been procured by her friends previous to the death of her father, the Duke de Brience, whose large fortune devolved, at his decease, solely to her, without being subject to the controul of her unworthy husband.

This circumstance, followed by his confinement, had irritated him almost to frenzy; and hopeless himself of enjoying the estates of the Duke, he was outrageous to find that the woman he detested with equal vehemence and injustice should undisturbedly inherit them; and to raise her a rival in the affections of Madame de Brience, who had possessions exclusive of her jointure, he chose to forego a most favourite and long-concerted plan. He had intimated to the Duchess that the child of the Prince de Lamare was under his protection; and this confirmed so exactly the confession of Bridonette, and the affirmation of Madelon, that she was firmly persuaded Laure was indeed her lost grand-daughter.

Her letter breathed the kindest, and most maternal sentiments; and she intreated the Abbé to have the goodness to convey the young lady to her, with a proper escort, and sent a servant of her own to attend her; who presented to the Abbé and his gouvernante many valuable and unequivocal proofs of the old Duchess's gratitude for the part they had acted in the discovery. She requested too that Madelon might be permitted to accompany Laure into Normandy, where she had for the present retired, both because she wished to see her, and that she had been disappointed in her intention of sending her principal femme de chambre, who was ill. Her own age and infirmities rendering the journey to her very tedious and painful.

To the last petition the Abbé gave an immediate and positive denial; very much to the discomposure of Madelon's temper, who was obliged to remain with him, because she could not get away without a passport, which was in the power of the Abbé alone to grant. He affirmed too that any escort would be superfluous; and observed with much complacency, that a small bit of paper signed by him would be a more powerful guard than any other that could be assigned her.

Laure was too impatient to quit him, to dispute this point; and thought the attendance of her own maid, and Louis, the servant Madame de Brience had sent, *added* to the small bit of paper signed by the Abbé, would be a sufficient protection from insult.

It was settled that she should depart early the next morning; and Madelon was inconsolable that she could not accompany her. To soften her grief, notwithstanding the liberal bounty of the Duchess, Laure presented her all the money she possessed; and as the gift was not proportionate to her wishes, she added to it some valuable trinkets.

In the evening Mr. Cosbyne called on the Abbé, and listened to the history of the day with great composure; for he had heard it all before from his valet, who had derived it from the indefatigable tongue of Madelon. When he understood that Laure was to make the journey with so slender an equipage, he determined immediately to travel the same road, and keep her in sight until she arrived at the habitation of the Duchess. On revolving this scheme, he could not forbear secretly blessing the perverseness of the conceited Priest, which gave him so excellent a plea for following an impulse that would have incited him to it without any plea at all.

Not suspecting his design, Laure began her journey; after being delayed an hour and half in receiving the caresses, and listening to the murmurs of the gouvernante, who scolded, whimpered, exclaimed and entreated to very little purpose; the Abbé remained inexorable, and she was obliged to submit to his will, and fulfil her destiny.

Laure travelled three stages very quietly, anticipating the new and delightful pleasure of embracing an indulgent parent. As she travelled without an Avant-Coureur, Louis could not provide against the chance of not meeting with post-horses; and this was actually the case at the fourth stage. The post-master, with an aristocratical politeness, lamented the accident, and assured her he expected horses in every minute; yet she was obliged to wait two hours before they made their appearance, and then exert her patience some time longer, before they could be rendered in any degree capable of performing what was expected of them.

In the interval Mr. Cosbyne's chaise drove to the door, and Laure, who was at a window, instantly saw him; but had no other suspicion than that he was accidentally travelling the same road with her, and thought it strange he had not spoken of it the day before. Delighted to find she had conceived this idea, he very readily confirmed it; and learning from her where she intended to rest for the night, he put her into the carriage, with the pleasing hope of seeing her again in the evening, and perhaps prevailing with her to allow him to sup with her. He was however disappointed, without having ventured to make the request: Laure's judgment pointed out to her that it would not be proper, and might give their meeting the air of a pre-concerted scheme. Yet the sweetness of her disposition inclining her to avoid the appearance of rudeness or designed neglect, she determined not to sup at all, and pleading fatigue, went immediately to bed. Mr. Cosbyne was sensibly mortified at the defeat of his hopes; and not being in the convenient habit of discharging ill humour at random, on any one who happened to be within the circumference of his power, he chose to follow her example, giving orders to be called at day-break.

Laure breakfasted in her own chamber; and Mr. Cosbyne finding her thus reserved, sent, while her chaise was getting ready, to beg her company for five minutes. He then acknowledged that his anxiety for her safety had induced him to follow her; and representing the expectation Madame de Brience entertained, that she was much better accompanied, told her he meant to have the honour of attending her, at the distance he had hitherto done, if she insisted on it, until he saw her under the protection of the Duchess.

‘I am infinitely obliged to you Sir,’ said Laure, very much surprised at his declaration, ‘for the extraordinary trouble you have taken; and whatever Madame de Brience may have intended, I am certain she cannot wish me to tax your benevolence so heavily. Neither indeed will I consent to occupy so much of your time, or allow you to take this long and troublesome journey on my account.’

‘If not on your’s,’ replied he, ‘permit it on mine; since were I to leave you now, I should be haunted by the idea that you had suffered every accident you could possibly be liable to, with an hundred more that my imagination would lay in your way: setting aside then my protection, which I hope will not be required, you must in compassion suffer me to pursue my plan.’

After many arguments on either side, Laure finding she could not overcome the obstinacy of his perseverance, continued her journey; and Mr. Cosbyne, exulting in his victory, followed the same route. They met at the place where Laure stopt to eat her dinner, and she felt that she could not avoid asking him to partake of it. Cosbyne joyfully accepted the proposal; and his conversation, refined and cheerful, well repaid her condescension. He made no further effort to see her until the next day, though he rested at night at the same inn, and appeared satisfied with knowing she was safe; a delicacy of conduct with which Laure was so much pleased, that she readily granted him an interview of half an hour, which he interceded for through the medium of her woman, who knew him from having accompanied Laure in her visit to Mrs. Grenby. He had just taken her hand to lead her to the chaise, when the door burst open, and the Marquis De Saint Ouin rushed in, his countenance ghastly, his eye, which glanced alternately at Laure and Mr. Cosbyne, flashed rage and indignation, and his lips quivering with contempt, endeavoured in vain to articulate the resentment he laboured to express. Such an apparition struck Mr. Cosbyne with astonishment, and overwhelmed Laure with a sensation that annihilated all her faculties. The Marquis could not behold her agony unmoved, and was advancing to her with a very different expression of countenance, when Mr. Cosbyne’s voice inquiring with solicitude, how he could relieve her indisposition, again stopt him. ‘Oh Heaven!’ exclaimed she, ‘what can be the meaning of this—why do you look thus strangely at me?’

‘I have been to ——’ returned he, ‘and the woman—your nurse has told me ——’

‘And is it then,’ said Laure, mournfully, ‘the knowledge of my unexpected happiness that agitates De Saint Ouin with such angry passions?’

‘Your happiness!’ exclaimed he with fury: ‘and do you thus to my face persevere in your perfidy, and insultingly call it happiness?’

‘I do not comprehend you, Sir,’ replied Laure, gravely.

Cosbyne’s ear had caught the name of Saint Ouin, and instantly brought to his imagination the dialogue at Wincale, in which he had been mentioned by Laure; and

renewed in his memory the images he had then conceived from it, which he had been so industriously employed to expel since this last unexpected meeting with her, that he had very nearly succeeded. He easily guessed the suspicions of De Saint Ouïn, and knowing they must soon be removed, he could not bear to witness his happiness: collecting therefore all the fortitude he possessed, he assumed an air of tranquillity, and addressing Laure, ‘Perhaps,’ said he, ‘Monsieur de Saint Ouïn will have time to explain himself, while I inquire if your carriage is ready.’

‘What does he mean?’ cried the Marquis, astonished at his sudden retreat.

‘Tell me rather,’ asked Laure, ‘what I must imply from a violence and asperity I had little reason to expect from you.’

‘Did you not?’ returned he, too much irritated to answer her questions but by another, ‘did you not quit —— with that Englishman? Did he not almost live at the Abbé’s house while you were there? Ah, Laure! how was I repaid for the anxiety I suffered at hearing of your detention? When I flew to ——, the only consolation I received, was the knowledge of this Englishman’s attachment, and the complacency with which you listened to him. I was obliged to attend to a detail that almost tortured my soul, before I could learn whither you had gone; I then heard at the same time that your lover accompanied you; and I find the fears and doubts I have reproached myself for feeling, too fatally corroborated by a testimony you cannot invalidate.’

‘What testimony do you speak of?’ she asked with surprise.

‘The evidence of my senses,’ replied the Marquis: ‘acquainted with his passion, you yet encourage his attendance, and permit him to travel with you.’

‘If you are persuaded of what you say,’ cried Laure in anger, ‘I should certainly fail in endeavouring to convince you of your error; but I must observe in justice to Mr. Cosbyne, that I believe his motive for the trouble he has taken is solely in consideration of the friendship his sister did me the honour to express for me, when I was in England.’

‘And did his sister commission him,’ returned De Saint Ouïn reproachfully, ‘to meet you so opportunely at ——?’

Laure, offended at his suspicions, turned from him without speaking; at that instant the following note was brought to her from Mr. Cosbyne.

“Mademoiselle D’Aubigny will, I hope, do me the justice to believe that I am equally concerned for her safety now, as when I formed the project of following her to the Chateau de Brience; yet as Monsieur de Saint Ouïn must feel the same solicitude for her security, he will no doubt pursue the same method of ensuring it: and my attendance, now no longer necessary, I trust Mademoiselle D’Aubigny has not hitherto thought officious or impertinent.

“H. COSBYNE.”

Laure was surprised at the coldness and pique so apparent in this billet, and so utterly contradictory of his usual manner: but as she was far from wishing the continuance of his attentions, after what had fallen from the Marquis, she was not sorry that he had signified his intention of quitting her. Occupied with other ideas, she was not at leisure to reflect on the apparent inconsistency of his conduct; first attaching himself to her with such warmth of sentiment, and then coldly resigning her to the care of another, who had not manifested any anxiety to receive the trust.

De Saint Ouïñ having waited with much impatience until her attention was disengaged, moved towards her with a deportment rather more humble, and asked if she still thought him unworthy of an answer?

‘Not when your reason is unclouded with causeless rage and resentment,’ replied she mildly.

‘May I then take the liberty of inquiring,’ returned De Saint Ouïñ, ‘if that billet is not from —— the gentleman who just now quitted the room?’ She replied that it was. ‘It must be urgent business,’ observed the Marquis, ‘that obliges him to write five minutes only after he leaves you!’

Laure was prevented from shewing him the note, by that part of it which related to him. She thought it would appear to be an invitation to fulfil Mr. Cosbyne’s supposition; yet to be silent about it, she feared would justify the suspicions of De Saint Ouïñ, which though they excited her indignation, she would very gladly have removed.

Mean-while Louis finding his young lady did not appear, took the liberty of quitting his post at the chaise door, where he had been stationed for some time, to inform her it had been ready near an hour; and he was afraid, unless she set out immediately, she could not perform the stage, which was a very long one, before it would be dark. Much disconcerted at this remonstrance, Laure hastily curtsied to De Saint Ouïñ, and accompanied Louis down stairs: the Marquis expecting to find Cosbyne waiting for her, followed with very hostile intentions. He was however deceived: Mr. Cosbyne appeared only at the moment the carriage was driving off, to make his bow, and with much precipitation, in a tremulous voice, to wish her a pleasant journey.

## CHAP. XXI.

LAURE had scarcely travelled two leagues, when, at the entrance of a small town, she observed a number of people assembled, who appeared to be waiting her arrival. When the chaise approached them, they set up a great shout, and thronging round it, loaded her with the coarsest epithets of opprobrium. She was dreadfully terrified; yet endeavoured to learn from their reproaches, the cause of their animosity. Her maid fell into strong convulsions, which added to the horrible distress that assailed her: she wished to speak to Louis, but was afraid of putting her head out of the carriage to call to him, neither indeed could he have forced his way through the crowd to get near her.

The tumult now became more outrageous; the door was thrown open, and Laure was pulled out of the chaise with the rudest violence. She still preserved her senses, and instinctively called out in English, the language she had lately been accustomed to, ‘What will become of me!’ Her beauty and extreme youth moved a few who were near her, to something resembling compassion, or her death would have been instantaneous. They conducted her to a kind of square, and began by interrogation, which was meant to be a form of trial.

Laure had too often heard of the conclusion of this mode of process, to doubt her fate. And the recollection of having parted from De Saint Ouïñ for the last time in anger, wrung her heart with such anguish, that the tears gushed from those eyes she raised to Heaven with an unconscious prayer that she might yet behold him once again. The accusations of her enraged judges, which she had at first been unable to comprehend, she now no longer heeded; and being called upon to confess her guilt, she stretched her clasped hands in silent and solemn adjuration to that Being, who knew her heart had never conceived an injurious purpose, or a criminal thought.

Some of the mob insisted on the instant execution of their vengeance; but those who immediately surrounded Laure, hesitated and still protracted the fatal sentence, which must however have been pronounced at last, had not De Saint Ouïñ, assisted by Louis, penetrated through the crowd with incredible efforts. The Marquis called vehemently to the self-created tribunal to stop—‘Citizens,’ cried he, ‘you are deceived: this is not the Duchess of ——, but an English woman.’

Her dress, her exclamation in a foreign language, and her succeeding silence, gave credit to the assertion. De Saint Ouïñ was proceeding to harangue the ferocious assembly, when he discovered a man who had formerly been a serjeant in his regiment: he called to him by his name; and as the Marquis was always very much beloved by those under his command, the recognition was of service to his cause. The old serjeant assured his companions that citizen Saint Ouïñ was a very honest man, and they might rely on his veracity. The air instantly resounded with “Vive les Anglois! Vive les Angloises!” To encourage the error, De Saint Ouïñ desired Laure to address those good citizens in her own language, if she could not speak to them in French, and he would translate what she said. Laure, revived and supported by the presence of the Marquis, spoke a few words in

English, which he repeated to them as he thought proper; and she was re-conducted to her chaise, amidst the most vehement acclamations of unbounded applause. Her maid, scarcely recovered, and not yet sensible of her deliverance, was placed by her side, and they were suffered to proceed on their journey.

The whole transaction had been so rapid, so terrible, and so unexpected, that Laure could hardly forbear thinking it had been a dream. Her woman appeared stupified with the fright, and had neither answered her inquiries, nor moved from her position, when a voice called vehemently to the post-boy to stop. Laure expecting that De Saint Ouïn's misrepresentation had been discovered, shrunk into a corner, almost as much alarmed with the apprehension of danger, as she had been with the reality. Her fears however vanished on seeing the Marquis, who rode up at full speed: he assured her she had nothing more to apprehend. 'I have many things to say,' added he, 'but I must not detain you. Will it incommode you too much to admit me into the chaise for an hour?' Laure assented: he gave his horse to Louis, and placed himself by her side.

'Great God!' cried he, 'what a dreadful scene have I witnessed! Oh, Laure, I tremble, I shudder to think of it!'

'It would have been the last I should ever have witnessed,' returned she with a soft emotion of gratitude, 'had you not been present at it.'

'What victims,' exclaimed the Marquis in a transport, 'will not their fury require, if they could have immolated thee!'

'I hope,' said Laure, 'the unhappy Duchess of —— will escape; I shall rejoice if my danger has been her safety.'

'She was expected to pass through that cursed town,' said De Saint Ouïn, 'yesterday; but I suppose she has taken another route.'

'May I ask why you represented me to be an Englishwoman?'

'I knew,' returned he, 'that their rage must be quickly prevented, or it could not be prevented at all; and to enter into a detail, and have your passport examined, I was afraid would have required more time than the wretches would have allowed; and I equally dreaded, if they had discovered your name, lest they should have comprised you in the detestation the Comte D'Ogimond has so universally incurred. But, oh, my Laure! think what I must have suffered until you left the place. I was myself compelled to stay a short time, that I might not excite suspicion by appearing too much interested in your safety.'

De Saint Ouïn added, that if she could travel all night without fatiguing herself too sensibly, Louis had told him she could reach the Chateau de Brience early in the morning: for he felt such horror when he thought of the danger she had escaped, that he wished to place as many leagues as he could between her and the authors of it. Laure was

equally anxious to finish her journey, and Louis was made acquainted with her determination.

The Marquis was so pleased with his situation, that he forgot to resign it; neither did Laure recollect to require it of him. When he imagined the femme de chambre had composed herself to rest, he earnestly entreated her pardon for the suspicions he had given way to on Mr. Cosbyne's account, which he told her originated in the voluntary communication of Madame Madelon. Laure had imagined that he derived them from that never tarrying source of loquacity, and was therefore more willing to excuse them.

At nine in the morning they turned out of the high road, and Louis led the way, telling Laure they were only three miles from the Chateau de Brience. Her emotion increased in proportion as the distance lessened; and the Marquis was not quite composed on reflecting that the Duchess would now be the arbitress of his fate in that of Laure.

The house soon caught her eager eye, the carriage stopt, she was taken out and conducted to Madame de Brience's dressing-room. De Saint Ouin pressed her hand as she quitted him, and was too much agitated to utter a syllable.

Laure entered the room with a timid and faltering step, and the Duchess fixed her eyes upon her as she advanced, with the most earnest attention. At length stretching out her arms to her trembling grand-child, who flew to meet the maternal embrace, Madame de Brience fell senseless on her bosom. Laure was terrified, and called for assistance; but as no one answered, and she could not disengage herself to ring, she endeavoured by the tenderest caresses, to revive the Duchess, who soon recovered to the delight she experienced in contemplating the countenance of Laure, where she fondly traced a resemblance of her lost son, whose early death she had deplored with an energy of grief time had not yet been able to subdue.

'Did Madelon Duhamel accompany my child?' asked Madame de Brience. Laure related the objections of the Abbé to part with her, and the reluctance with which the gouvernante had submitted to remain with him. 'Whom then did he appoint to attend you?' — 'He thought,' returned she, 'that the servant you, Madam, had the goodness to send, and my maid—'

'Had you then no other protection?' said the Duchess with surprise. 'Good heavens! I would have sent every servant I have, rather than have exposed you to such perils as this calamitous moment teems with, had I not thought the magistrate would, at my request, have appointed you a more popular guard. What anxiety should I have suffered, had I known you were traversing this unhappy country without a probability of averting those evils you were so likely to encounter!'

Laure's face was overspread with a deep blush, while she related the accidental protection she had met with: the narrative exhibited an ingenuousness which, with the prelude emotion, excited a smiling attention in her auditors, until she recited the danger she had escaped by the assistance of the Marquis de Saint Ouin.

‘Where is the young man?’ cried Madame de Brience, ‘that I may thank him for preserving thee.’

On inquiring, Louis affirmed that he had left the house almost instantly, and departed in the chaise that had brought Mademoiselle. Laure felt excessively disconcerted at this intelligence, nor was the Duchess less disappointed. ‘Why does he avoid the gratitude to which he has so just a claim?’ said she. ‘Does he know how much I estimate the dear child he has rescued from destruction?’

Laure, charmed with a tenderness she had been so little accustomed to, fell at her feet, and looked up with so humble, so beautiful an acknowledgment, that the Duchess accompanied her caresses with tears.

The prepossession each had conceived for the other, hourly increased: Madame de Brience was delighted with the vivacity and sweetness of Laure’s temper, and surprised at the elevation of sentiment, and soundness of judgment that stole upon her observation, on a more intimate acquaintance; while Laure was equally captivated with the mild and engaging virtues of her maternal friend. The anxiety they mutually felt for Mademoiselle D’Ogimond was soon relieved, by learning that Madame Germeil had possessed address enough to obtain her own liberty and that of her pupil; and Madame de Brience was informed they had quitted the kingdom, but it was still uncertain where they had taken refuge. The Comte remained in confinement, nor was it supposed he would regain his freedom: the latter part of the intelligence was not very grievous to the feelings of a mother whose son he had been instrumental in destroying, and whose daughter had found her whole life embittered by his degenerate vices.

A letter was brought to Madame de Brience one morning, in the presence of Laure, from the Comtesse D’Ogimond. After reading it attentively, and with great emotion, ‘Laure,’ said the Duchess, ‘my daughter commissions me to assure you, that you will find in her an affectionate friend: she acknowledges you as her niece, and desires you will participate with her in the inheritance of her father.’

Laure’s cheeks were instantly suffused with blushes, and her eyes filled with tears; she had never before been so painfully affected; and feeling the generosity of the Comtesse with all its force, was penetrated with the keenest regret for having been induced to think unworthily of a woman who could act so nobly. Madame de Brience was surprised at her excessive emotion, and inquired the cause of it.

‘Oh, Madam,’ returned she, ‘Adeline will perhaps continue to be misled, as we have both been, and will not know the blessing she ought to possess in such a mother. I receive the offered friendship of the Comtesse as the highest honor, and am grateful that she will condescend to own me; but she must preserve her fortune for herself and for her children, who will one day, I trust, be better informed of her virtues than they are at present.’

‘My daughter possesses indeed the goodness you impute to her,’ said Madame de Brience, ‘yet in this affair she exercises only her integrity: she knows you have a claim to what she offers thus freely to your acceptance; and though you might find it very difficult, perhaps impossible, to elucidate that claim, yet as she is satisfied it exists, she thus uncompelled acknowledges the justice of it. I think I may venture to confide to that amiable and un-ambitious mind,’ continued she, ‘all the truth. You are, my sweet Laure, the legitimate child of my unhappy son: before I knew you, I was doubtful, if I had found you ignorant of this circumstance, whether I should act right in imparting it to you; for the Comtesse, you see, is willing to restore your inheritance; and as for titles and honors, they are now no more. What purpose then would be answered by plunging the family of the Prince’s supposed and acknowledged wife into the grief and indignation they must feel on learning a fact that stained the life of their innocent relation with unmerited obloquy, and brings to light a guilt, I, as a mother, would wish to have buried for ever.’

To a discovery so unexpected Laure listened in mute wonder; and the idea of her mother occupying her imagination, ‘Is she yet alive?’ said she eagerly. —‘Who, my child?’—‘Is my mother alive?’—‘No,’ replied Madame de Brience, turning aside her face; ‘she retired from the world on that occasion which brought to light the perfidy of your father, and died shortly after. But spare me,’ continued the Duchess, ‘on this subject; it is too painful.’

Laure’s tears accompanied those of Madame de Brience, who in caressing the child of the injured and deserted mother, whose destiny she had often deplored, still in gazing at her as the living image of the father, satisfied the unextinguishable fondness of a parent, to a son whose death had cast a veil over his crimes.

## CHAP. XXII.

MADAME DE BRIENCE wrote to the old Marquis de Saint Ouïn, with whom she was slightly acquainted; and avowing the obligation his son had conferred upon her, with all the warmth of gratitude her increasing attachment to her grand-child inspired, lamented that he had withdrawn from her personal acknowledgment.

In ten days De Saint Ouïn himself brought the answer. Madame de Brience was alone when he was announced; she welcomed him with the utmost kindness, and smilingly reproached him for having so precipitately quitted her, without deigning to receive her thanks for the treasure he had brought her.

‘I feared, Madam,’ replied the Marquis rather embarrassed, ‘that at such a moment—and indeed I was entirely disqualified from having the honor of appearing before you, by travelling—without a servant.’

‘Well, well,’ interrupted the Duchess good humouredly, ‘we would have allowed you to make your toilet, while we wept over the happiness we owed to you. But why did you so long delay the pleasure your presence gives me?’

‘My father represented to me,’ replied the Marquis, ‘that by returning so precipitately—by returning immediately, I should raise a suspicion, if I happened to be observed, that might prove injurious to you in the present crisis of affairs. This motive alone could have had power to withhold me from sooner making an effort, which though I feel myself irresistibly impelled to, I tremble for its success.’

He then presented a letter from his father. The features of Madame de Brience, as she read, lost the smile which had adorned them, and she gravely considered the lines as they fell under her eye, longer than appeared necessary. The old Marquis had demanded of her, in form, the hand of Laure for his son; who traversing the apartment in a tumult of anxiety, observed the alteration of her countenance with yet increasing perturbation, which was wrought to its utmost height by the sudden entrance of Laure, who had been amusing herself in a small greenhouse contiguous to the Duchess’s dressing-room, and was ignorant of his arrival. She started, and Madame de Brience lifting up her eyes, beheld her in a confusion equally evident to others and painful to herself; while De Saint Ouïn, uncertain of his fate, addressed her with a solemnity that chilled her soul. After a silence of a few minutes, Madame de Brience recollecting herself, said to the Marquis, who felt every nerve vibrate to the sound, ‘Your father, M. De Saint Ouïn, tells me I cannot much longer continue in this country, and advises me to make every proper disposition for retreating to a happier one. He says you will have the goodness to inform me of the occurrences that render this step instantly necessary. I have already remitted large sums to England and Holland—but we will discuss this subject further after dinner; for the present let it rest.’

The intervening hours were passed by De Saint Ouïn in a state of restraint and suspense, so irksome, that his wishes secretly urged the approaching explanation, terrible as it appeared to him. While Laure, depressed by the thoughtful gravity of the Duchess, and the yet deeper gloom that overcast the features of the Marquis, felt her spirits sink beyond the possibility of concealment. In the evening Madame de Brience revived the subject of her intended emigration, and gaily asked Laure if she preferred assisting at the consultation, to amusing herself in any other manner?’

‘No, Madam,’ she replied, ‘for I have not the vanity to imagine that I really can assist the consultation.’

‘Perhaps you might,’ said the Duchess smiling; ‘but I shall not insist on such a sacrifice of your time.’

Laure comprehended her meaning, and withdrew. She threw herself, when alone, on a sofa, and fell into a profound reverie: without being sensible of the time that had elapsed in meditation, she was roused by the appearance of De Saint Ouïn, who approached her with an air of satisfaction she could not but observe.

‘Is Madame de Brience alone?’ exclaimed she, rising hastily.

‘She is,’ returned he, ‘and kindly indicating to me where I might seek you, has permitted me to inform you of the result of our conference.’

‘And what then is decided?’ asked Laure, alluding to the projected flight.

‘That my fate depends solely upon you,’ replied he, throwing himself into an attitude of supplication. ‘Your kind, your worthy friend, has relieved the apprehension, that tormented me this morning, by acknowledging, that the only reluctance she feels, to promote my happiness, is the consequent loss to herself, of a blessing so lately found, and so highly prized.’

‘I must be dead to every sentiment of gratitude,’ said Laure, ‘if I did not declare, that it is to me a serious objection; and equally,’ she added with a deep blush, ‘that it is the only one I should entertain, if——’

‘How easily it is removed!’ cried the Marquis in a transport: ‘Why should I detach you from this dear and venerable friend, who is so sensible of your worth? No—take me to your society; and let my whole life be spent, in evincing my gratitude to you both.’

Laure highly approved the proposition; but then, recollecting that the Duchess might possibly expect her return to the drawing-room, she, with some difficulty, prevailed upon De Saint Ouïn to permit it. Madame de Brience, looking at her with complacency, as she entered, thought she had never before appeared so much to resemble her son. She was soon ascertained of Laure’s prepossession in favor of De Saint Ouïn; and confirmed the flattering hopes, she had already given him.

He remained two days at the Chateau de Brience; and then reluctantly left it, to inform the old Marquis of his happy success, and consult him on the best method, the Duchess could pursue, to avoid the ruin, that threatened every individual of the rank to which she appertained: for this was a subject, they did not dare to confide to any domestic, however faithful and attached.

Nine days elapsed, without hearing of him; and Madame de Brience could no longer sustain the drooping spirits of the anxious Laure.

They had just retired for the night, when they were alarmed by hearing that De Saint Ouïn was arrived, and earnestly desired to see them immediately. He was introduced to the apartment of the Duchess; whither Laure instantly flew. But what a shock did she receive on seeing him! He looked pale, fatigued, dispirited,—and was habited in a dress, at once coarse, dirty and mean; yet it could not effectually disguise a person, adorned with all the dignified grace of manly beauty. He had been obliged, he said, to travel twenty leagues south of Paris, instead of taking the route to Normandy, to elude suspicion; and change his dress, to avoid observation.

De Saint Ouïn then cautiously informed the Duchess, that it was known, by the confession of her agent, she had sent money out of the kingdom; which had created such a jealousy of her principles, and intentions, that he feared, it would be dangerous, to delay her departure, four and twenty hours. ‘I will go to the coast,’ added he, ‘immediately, and engage a vessel, if Valain has not already done it; which I have some reason to hope.’

Madame de Brience was confounded at this intelligence; and Laure was equally affected. De Saint Ouïn, tenderly pressing her hand, entreated her to be composed; while his own countenance exhibited a distress, he endeavoured in vain to conceal.

It was at length agreed, that they should be prepared to accompany Valain; who was to be sent, as early as possible, the next day, with a hired carriage, to conduct them to the place, from whence they were to embark for England;—that they should not have any other attendant, and be very plainly dressed. The Marquis was compelled to confide them thus to the care of Valain, and remain himself on the coast, both to preserve the vessel for their use, and because it would be highly imprudent, and dangerous, to be observed passing and repassing the same road often, in so short a time. The necessity of this circumstance gave him so much uneasiness, that he could scarcely persuade himself, they would not be prevented, by some inauspicious accident, from meeting as he proposed: and he quitted the Chateau, as he had entered it, in great despondency.

Madame de Brience recovering her composure, with a firmness of mind, that excited the emulative admiration of Laure, passed the remainder of the night, in settling what appeared to her the most urgent of her affairs. She had already retrenched much of her household, in conformity to the times; and entrusting to her steward the secret of her flight, she instructed him to give each individual of her family a gratuity, beyond their appointments; and to inform them, that, if they chose to follow her in her exile, they

should still be continued in their respective offices. She did not dare to write to her daughter, lest she should involve her in the suspicions, she had herself incurred; but sent by the steward, as the safer mode of communication, a verbal account of the necessity of the step she was taking.

## CHAP. XXIII.

WHEN the Duchess had made every arrangement in her power, she awaited, with calm concern, the moment, that would tear her from the spot, which she venerated, as the former habitation of her husband's ancestors, and equally loved, as the place that had often witnessed the happiness of her youthful days.

Valain did not arrive till mid-day: he had been unable to procure any kind of carriage, but by going to a post-town, ten miles distant from the Chateau; and had been obliged to walk part of the way, because his horse had knocked up. He respectfully urged the ladies to an immediate departure; for he dreaded the effect of his master's anxious impatience, at this unexpected delay.

Madame de Brience rose, as he spoke, and walking to the window, with an air of dignity, looked steadily at the surrounding landscape, for a minute; and then, fixing her eyes, with equal solemnity, on the family pictures that hung round the room, she turned suddenly to Laure, and throwing, her arms round her; exclaimed, 'How could I support this, had I not such a consolation!'

Attended by the steward, (from whose melancholy countenance she turned with anguish) and supported by Laure, she passed hastily through the apartments, and walked to the place, where the carriage waited, unobserved by the domestics.

They travelled three hours, in a sad and apprehensive silence, interrupted only by Valain, who urged the driver, from time to time, to greater speed. When they arrived at the hut, by the sea-side, where De Saint Ouin had appointed to wait for them, Valain dismounted and entered it; but returning, with a look of dismay, declared the Marquis was not there.

Laure turned to Madame de Brience, with a look of anguish, and alarm, that wrung her heart. She consulted with Valain on what was to be done; who, after some consideration, told the ladies that a boat waited, at an appointed place, to conduct them to the vessel; which was at anchor at a small distance, that it might be the less observed from the shore: and he advised them to get on board immediately, and have every thing kept ready, to sail at a minute's notice, while he went to the adjacent villages to seek his master: and if he did not return by sun-set, they must then make for the English coast.

They waited an hour at the hut, in anxious expectation, before this plan was put into execution; and then, Saint Ouin not appearing, with sinking hearts, and exhausted spirits, they suffered Valain to conduct them to the boat. Just at the moment they caught a sight of it, it was putting out to sea. Valain advancing eagerly, shouted with all the vehemence, such a mortifying sight inspired; and the men, either hearing or seeing him, turned back. They said, they had been waiting there six hours, without any food; and their patience being quite exhausted, they were going on board, to procure something to eat.

Valain accompanied the ladies to the vessel; and, giving proper directions to the master, returned to the shore, to begin an expedition, he was himself hopeless of succeeding in. He was, however, mistaken: in the evening he brought intelligence, that the Marquis, while he was impatiently waiting, at a small distance from the hut, had been surprised by a large party, chiefly consisting of National Guards, who demanded of him, if he had seen a lady, (describing, as he thought, Madame de Brience) in any part of his route that day. Alarmed at the question, and desirous of removing them from a place, where he expected to see her arrive every minute, the Marquis mentioned a village, about five miles distant, where he said, he thought he had observed such a person.

The leaders of this tumultuous band, not in a situation to profit by verbal instruction, (being more than half intoxicated) insisted that De Saint Ouin should attend them, to the place he had indicated; and he was compelled to follow them.

He learnt by the way, that they had been on the road to the Chateau de Brience; but stopping within three miles of it, to refresh themselves at an Auberge, they were told, probably by some person who respected the Duchess, that she had quitted her house the day before. Without giving themselves the trouble of investigating the truth of this information, and very well satisfied with their situation, they continued drinking, until they became incapable of forming any plan of pursuit; but strolled about they knew not where: and nothing but a mischance, such as she had so narrowly escaped, could have put the Duchess in their power. De Saint Ouin accompanied them, in an agony of impatience and anxiety, human nature could hardly support.

As the progress of these sapient executors of justice was not the most quiet, or orderly, Valain heard of them at every cottage he passed; and, judging that they were very probably, by some means, concerned in his master's disappearance, he traced them to the village De Saint Ouin had led them to; and found his conjectures but too well certified.

He discovered the Marquis, with half repress rage, and despair, in his countenance, sitting in the midst of the disorderly band, whose spirits were not at all impaired, by the disappointment of their purpose.

De Saint Ouin cast his eyes on Valain, with a look of apprehension, the intelligent fellow endeavoured to dispel, by an air of cheerfulness and unconcern. He found means to converse with his master, for ten minutes; who, after listening to the account he gave of the Duchess and Laure, desired him to return, and entreat them to sail instantly; and he would contrive to follow them to England. He added, that the wretches already looked upon him with a jealous eye, and suspected the truth of the relation he had given of himself: and he did not dare attempt an escape, unless he were certain they were no longer on the French coast; that their pursuit of him, might not be the means of discovering them.

Valain was obliged to leave the Marquis, in this alarming situation; for he would not listen to any proposal, and persevered in declaring, he would not make any effort, to

recover his freedom, until he could reasonably imagine Madame de Brience and Laure were on the other side of the Channel: and, exhorting Valain to diminish, as much as possible, the inconveniencies of their voyage, by the most diligent attention, he dismissed him.

The anguish, inflicted by Valain's narrative, there was no time to express; for, by his previous direction, and the concurrence of the Duchess, they had stood out to sea. Madame de Brience suffered amazingly; and Laure, struggling at once against severe indisposition, and the most afflicting and dispiriting reflections, exerted herself incredibly to assist her.

The wind was fair; and at day-break they saw the land, they were making for. The morning was serene and pleasant; and between six and seven they reached the shore. The impatience of the Duchess to quit the vessel was so great, that she would not allow Valain to procure a carriage, before she disembarked. She sat upon the beach, incapable of moving; yet lifted up her eyes in thankfulness, that the severity of her sufferings were past.

While Valain hesitated, whether he should go instantly for assistance, to convey the ladies to an inn, or wait until the Duchess had a little recovered from her weakness,—a gentleman, who was walking on the beach, observing the appearance of distress they exhibited, came hastily up; and Laure, lifting her languid eyes on the joyful exclamation Valain uttered, recognized Mr. Fitzpier, with a degree of satisfaction, that made her spring forward to meet him.

The state in which he found the ladies, did not require any explanation: he had seen them land, and observed the men return immediately to their vessel, which was a large fishing smack; and concluded them to be, what they unhappily were,—French Exiles. He desired Valain to remain with the ladies; and, darting off like lightning, returned, in a quarter of an hour, with a carriage; into which he assisted Madame de Brience, and Laure;—and informing them, they were at a small watering place, on the Sussex coast, he accompanied them to a lodging-house, and gave them possession of a very neat apartment, he had occupied. His good-humoured exertions procured them every comfort the place afforded; and, while they took the repose they so much required, Fitzpier rode to the seat of a neighbouring gentleman, with whose family he was intimately acquainted; and representing the rank and merit of the strangers, and their situation, so unequal to it, Mrs. Dolby, the wife of his friend, returned with him, to offer her house, and every accommodation in her power, to their acceptance.

Madame de Brience expressed her gratitude, for an hospitality so liberal; but found herself so exhausted with fatigue, that she was quite unequal to the task of removing, though only a few miles.

Mrs. Dolby hearing she was without a female servant, sent one of her own to attend her, until another could be procured; and exerted herself, to alleviate the inconveniences they suffered, with the most assiduous benevolence.

## CHAP. XXIV.

THE next morning, before the Duchess arose, the anxious Laure, accompanied by Valain, indulged herself with walking on the beach; and casting many a look of solicitude, towards the coast she had quitted, returned sad and disappointed; endeavouring, however, to avert the alarms she felt, from the sympathizing bosom of her suffering friend.

Fitzpier, sending up his name in the evening, was admitted very readily; and received the acknowledgments of Madame de Brience, for the generous and uncommon attention, he had shewn to her and her grand-daughter. This appellation surprised him; but, without expressing it, he congratulated himself for having been induced, by the serenity of the morning, to be in the way of offering his assistance.

When he withdrew, the Duchess retired to rest: and Laure, then abandoning herself to extreme dejection, sat listening to the wind, which was loud and boisterous;—her imagination industriously representing to her De Saint Ouïn, on his passage, encountering all the fury of the storm. These reflections occupied her all the night; and she started up at every sudden gust, to listen to the sound of imaginary distress, which incessantly filled her ears.

Early in the morning, she again returned to the beach; though she was often unable to advance a step, from the violence of the blast. The sea was tumultuously agitated; and Valain, on observing it, was far from being without anxiety.

While Laure was walking pensively, as near the sea as she could with prudence, Fitzpier came up to her.—‘I heard,’ cried he, ‘that you had walked this way, or, I must confess, I should not have guessed it; and I come to try if I can assist you, in your contest with the mighty North-East.’ He had hardly pronounced the words, when a furious whirlwind tore off his hat, and delivering it over to a wave, it was out of sight in a second. Fitzpier laughed at the accident, which had power only to discompose the outside of his head; and, as he still insisted on attending Laure, she was obliged, from humanity, to give up the satisfaction, she apparently felt, in being buffeted in so outrageous a manner; and proposed to bend her steps homeward. But, as she gave a parting glance at the contending waves, she thought she discovered a boat, just lifted for a moment into sight, and again disappearing. She turned hastily back; and, fixing her ardent eyes on the space, from which the object had vanished, remained immovable. Fitzpier asked, what had thus arrested her attention; but she heard him not: and the next minute bringing the boat again in view, he saw it; and, recollecting that the Marquis was expected, guessed at once, the reason of an earnestness so intense. The sea ran amazingly high; and he was doubtful, if the venturous mariners would ever reach the shore. The boat was sometimes lost, for five minutes; and then again appeared, on the summit of an enormous wave.

Laure gazed in breathless agitation; and Fitzpier, to divert her apprehensions, exclaimed, ‘How could those foolish fishermen put out, in such weather as this?’ He dispatched Valain to give notice of their situation, and try to obtain assistance for them;

and then endeavoured to prevail with Laure to return home, as the Duchess, he said, might be alarmed at the length of her absence. She was deaf to his representations; and heeded only the single object, on which her eyes, her soul was fixt.

The boat, which was an open one, was thrown a little nearer to the beach; which was soon crowded with those who came to look at the distress, and a few who came to relieve it. At length, one of the unhappy voyagers was washed overboard: Laure observing it, uttered a faint shriek, and sunk lifeless in the arms of Fitzpier. He conveyed her to the nearest house; and, desiring Valain to see her properly attended, returned to encourage the fishermen of the place, to save the boat's crew. They all declared, however, that it would be in vain to try; for they should only run the same hazard of perishing, without being of any service. The boat was declared to be a Frenchman; and, as it still made a little way, the people procured ropes to assist it, should they be so fortunate as to get within reach of them.

Fitzpier offered fifty guineas to any man, who would venture with him in a skiff, with ropes fastened to it, held by the people on shore, and carrying others, to throw to the distressed mariners. The bribe tempted a fellow, more daring than his companions; and they put off, amidst the encouraging shouts of the multitude; whose acclamations followed the generous humanity, they were unwilling to imitate.

The wind now abated a little; and, after numberless efforts, Fitzpier accomplished his benevolent purpose—and brought to land four men, (all who remained in the boat) nearly exhausted with opposing the fury of the storm. One of them eagerly asked, on what part of the English coast he then was. Fitzpier, struck by his voice, turned to him, with quickness, and discovered De Saint Ouïn, in the dress of a common sailor; his countenance disfigured by fatigue, and neglect. The recognition was mutual; and Fitzpier, directing his own servant, who was in the number of the spectators, to pay attention to the proper accommodation of the three Frenchmen, conducted the Marquis to his lodgings;—which were not, it is true, so convenient as those he had ceded to the Duchess de Brience, yet they were found very comfortable by De Saint Ouïn, who had not been in bed for a week. He wished, however, before he reposed, to ask some questions of Fitzpier; who would not, by any means, allow it;—and he quitted his guest just time enough, to prevent the appearance of Valain; who, having heard of his arrival, exhibited the most frantic joy, and earnestly desired to embrace his dear Marquis, after all the perils he had undergone.

Fitzpier did not chuse to comply with his wish; which, he imagined, had more affection than prudence in it: and deliberately locking the master in, and the man out, he marched to Madame de Brience, and Laure, to give the welcome information of De Saint Ouïn's safety.

They had already heard it; and learnt too, that it was imputed solely to the generous gallantry of Fitzpier. Laure met him at the door, and involuntarily embraced him, with an expression of countenance, “with which an angel may be supposed to look at his Creator.”

‘Where is he?’ cried the Duchess, eagerly.

Fitzpier told her, in what manner he had disposed of De Saint Ouïn; and added, that he did not yet know how near they were to him, as his entire ignorance of it was the only thing, that could have made him take the repose, he so much wanted. ‘And now,’ continued he, ‘I will return, and guard him from the intemperate zeal of poor Valain.’ His precaution was rather too late; for the Marquis had already heard his voice, which it was impossible to avoid, as Valain insisted on remaining at the chamber-door, execrating the officious interference of the Irishman.

De Saint Ouïn, concluding the ladies were not at a great distance, started up, and was surprised, and incensed, to find himself locked in. Fitzpier soon liberated him; and, perceiving that the circumstance of his vicinity to Laure could no longer be concealed, he was obliged to admit Valain, that he might officiate, in improving the appearance of his master; which was sufficient to alarm any one, less attached to him than Madame de Brience, and her lovely grand-daughter. This task hastily executed, he flew to them; and received a compensation for all he had suffered, and almost for what he had apprehended. The Duchess embraced him, with all the fondness of a tender mother; while Laure wept, and smiled, with a sweet combination of sensibility, and joy.

The worthy Fitzpier shared the felicity, he had been so instrumental in promoting: his own heart liberal, open, and sincere, very forcibly felt the attraction of these qualities in others; and when the ladies and De Saint Ouïn removed to London, he experienced so sensibly the loss of their society, that he soon followed them.

The promise made by the Duchess to her servants, by the intervention of her steward, to receive them again to her service, was claimed by most of them; and she was struck with the attachment, by which they were induced to prefer exile with her, to their native country, whither she could probably never return.

## CHAP. XXV.

DE SAINT OUIÏN had not been long in London, when he had the satisfaction of hearing from his father, that he was almost prepared to quit a scene of contention, and misery, that became every hour more insupportable: yet, as he should be obliged to pass into Switzerland, before he could join his son in England, he would entreat Madame de Brience not to delay the honour, she meant to confer upon his family, for the uncertain chance of his presence.

The Duchess received a letter to the same purpose; and determined, in consequence of it, to accelerate the union of De Saint Ouïin with Laure. The preparations for this event could not now be clogged, by the retarding ceremonies of high rank; and their fortunes, reduced from superfluity to a competency, though yet ample, did not require a length of time to settle.

In the attachment of the Marquis to his Laure, he had always been doubtful of success, and often hopeless: his felicity then in obtaining her, was proportionately increased by his former fears. Nor was hers less complete: to receive the sanction of a Parent, to a passion, she had so long, and so innocently cherished, was a perfection of happiness, to which her highest hopes had scarcely ever soared.

Madame de Brience had often been at a loss to divine, what could have induced the Comte D'Ogimond, to secrete Laure from her knowledge, and educate her, with the same care as his daughter, in the strictest principles of virtue. An accident unexpected, and unforeseen, illustrated his motive.—Madame de Brience was in a situation to relieve the pressing wants of her fellow-exiles; nor were they slow in demanding it, or the Duchess unwilling to succour those, who could procure a recommendation, from any known character. She could not even withhold her bounty from many, who had not the same advantage; and was often induced, by compassion, to alleviate the misery that casually met her eye, or struck her ear.

From the representation of one of her domestics, she was influenced to listen to the narrative of a man, who described himself to have lived in the first class of society, and to be now reduced to the most abject poverty. While he was yet telling his tale, Laure accidentally entered, and recognised, in the stranger, a man she had often observed, in long and deep conference with Madame de Germeil, and the Comte. She started; and his appearance exhibited such guilt, and confusion, that the Duchess could not forbear asking Laure, where she had before seen him.

He prevented her reply, by throwing himself at the feet of Madame de Brience, and acknowledging, that he had deceived her, in the account he had given of himself;—and that he had long been a miserable confidant, and agent of the crimes, of the Comte D'Ogimond; upon whose confinement, he had been compelled to quit France. He was ignorant, he said, that Mademoiselle Laure had discovered her affinity to the Duchess;

but he was heartily rejoiced, that she had escaped from the Comte, before his diabolical project had been effected. 'What project?' asked Madame de Brience hastily.

'It was on the declining health of the Prince de Lamare,' returned he, 'that he first concealed Mademoiselle Laure. He feared the discovery, Monsieur de Lamare might make, with regard to the child, would lessen the inheritance of Madame la Comtesse: but a few years after, the violent dislike he conceived for Madame D'Ogimond, and the increasing beauty of Mademoiselle, inspired him with the horrible design of obtaining a divorce, and, proving the legitimacy of Mademoiselle Laure, of securing the estates of the Duke de Brience, by marrying her, as the heiress of the Prince de Lamare.'

The Duchess shuddered at the recital; and the blood almost congealed in Laure's veins. She inquired if Madame de Germeil had concurred in this shocking plan.

The man replied, that the Comte had once mentioned it to her; but she thought the scheme so wild and dangerous, that she had persuaded him to give it up. When he found her so averse to it, he had spoken of it no more; but continued firm in his purpose, of putting it into execution, when he imagined he had influence enough to accomplish it.

Madame de Brience, unable to bear in her sight the avowed associate of so much villany, gave him a small sum, to relieve his immediate necessities, and dismissed him.

'Let me be thankful,' she exclaimed, when he had quitted the room, 'that one of my unfortunate offspring has escaped the infernal snares of this iniquitous monster! Oh! Lamare, would thou hadst lived, to see this lovely child of thine, whose goodness, and whose virtues diffuse comfort, and happiness, so liberally around her!'

De Saint Ouin endeavoured, by the most respectful and endearing attentions, to supply the place of the lost son, she could not even yet cease to deplore; and the anguish of bitter reflection was at length dispersed, in the contemplation of present happiness.

Madame de Brience learnt, that her daughter lived in peace, notwithstanding the storms that surrounded her; and that her virtues were respected, even in a country, where the existence of virtue was almost denied. Relying on circumstances, so unexpectedly favourable, the Duchess yet hoped, she might escape the general devastation; and turned her eyes, with satisfaction, on her little domestic circle.

Fitzpier was called from it, only to return with an amiable, and charming young woman, who had, on the removal of the only obstacle to their union, rewarded a long and sincere attachment. She was received with complacency, as the wife of Fitzpier; and soon cherished, with affection, for her own engaging qualities.

Madame de Brience, and her children, could no longer, it is true, live in the splendor, to which they had been accustomed; but nature had happily given them qualifications, to enjoy the most exalted felicity, in a state of comparative obscurity.

FINIS.